

Forest Hill Emergency Kindergarten

1960 – 1988

Other Names:

- Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care
- Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten

Details

The Forest Hill Emergency Kindergarten opened in 1960. It provided short-term residential care for up to 20 children, and day care for smaller groups of children, aged 2 – 6 years during times of family stress or breakdown. By around 1969 the Kindergarten had an annual intake of 230 children. In 1988 the Kindergarten's residential program was discontinued and a new day care kindergarten program commenced.

Affiliated with the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, Forest Hill was maintained by the Graduates' Association of the Kindergarten Training College in Melbourne. The Association originally purchased the Warrawong property in Forest Hill in 1926, and established a 'holiday home' for children in need.

In 1960, in response to changing needs of the community, it became known as the Forest Hill Emergency Kindergarten, providing short-term residential care for groups of up to twenty children of pre-school age (2 – 6 years) during times of family stress or breakdown. The Kindergarten also accepted a small group of children for day care when similar emergencies arose.

Although registered with the Hospital and Charities Commission, the Forest Hill Emergency Kindergarten was not an approved children's home. The Kindergarten's Committee discussed applying for such approval however it elected to maintain independent control of intake policy and control the children's age range and length of time accommodated.

The work of the Kindergarten was praised by Mr John Richardson in Victoria's Legislative Assembly on 28 April 1976:

The Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care provides a unique service for, regrettably, too few children. The service is for children who are in impossible domestic situations. An example would be the case of a father being in gaol and the mother being left at home in difficult circumstances with a number of children. She could be under severe mental strain and on the verge of a nervous breakdown; or it could be worse. We have examples of the mother in fact cracking and starting to mistreat the children. There could be an impossible domestic situation in which the mother and father attacked each other in front of the children. The residential kindergarten provides a refuge and emergency care so that the children can be removed from that impossible environment and something done to restore the domestic situation. Although there are areas in which success has not been achieved, during the many years that the institution has been established its record has been sound and it has achieved much success.

Following the regionalisation of emergency residential care by Community Services Victoria, emergency care placements to Forest Hill Kindergarten declined from 1983 and in 1988 the Kindergarten's residential program was discontinued and a new day care kindergarten program commenced.

Following further Government funding difficulties all programs at Forest Hill began to close from June 1990 and the property was sold in 1991. Part of the sale proceeds was used to establish the Forest Hill Early Childhood Foundation in 1995. In 2005, it became known as the Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies, and it distributes funds to the Early Childhood Development field for projects which focus on the well-being, education and care of young children and families.

More info

Resources

- Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten, *Forest Hill Residential Kindergarten, 1926-1976: A History, from Holiday Home to Emergency Care*, 1976
- [Forest Hill \(Residential\) Kindergarten \(1927-88\)](#), Finding Records, No date. *Relevance:* See the 'List of records held by the department' section for information about records relating to Forest Hill Emergency Kindergarten

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records

- [Institute of Early Childhood Development Graduates Association \(1937 - 2003\)](#)
- [Voluntary Children's Homes Files \(1921 - 1989\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/forest-hill-emergency-kindergarten/>